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AGAIN
"THE MIRACLE OF THE MARNE"

By
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In May of this year Mr. Houston, one of the publishers of the WORLD'S WORK, was in Paris when reports were being received from official and other important sources in America that France was not at work. He determined to learn the truth about these reports, which were sorely perplexing and disturbing the French, through a first-hand study of the situation; this article is the result. In addition to personal data and observation it is based on recent official facts and documents.

The Publishers of the *World's Work* have departed from their established policy and permitted the publication of this article because of their desire to spread the truth about France.

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AGAIN "THE MIRACLE OF THE MARNE"



France's Victory of Peace in Her Work of Reconstruction
Facts Which Nail the Lie That Her People Are Not Working

BY HERBERT S. HOUSTON

WHEN Maurice Barres wrote his remarkable book on "The Soul of France" in the second year of the war he said that that Soul was in the hearts of the millions who had rushed to the colors. It was their faith and courage that sustained the faith and courage of those for whom they fought. And the France of to-day, struggling with the seemingly superhuman task of lifting herself from the ashes of ruin, seems to be sustained by that same army, especially by that invisible army of nearly a million and a half of her sons who sleep in her soil.

The Princess de Polignac, with her fatherless children around her, said to me in Rheims: "We widows of the war feel that we have a sacred trust, from those who died, to rebuild France—for it was for France that they gave all." That is the Soul of France in these hard months that have followed the Armistice, just as it was in the fifty months of war.

How has France given "outward and visible" evidences of this faith? The story of it is another miracle of the Marne. These seem to be

strong words, but nothing less sweeping is adequate. And these words are written in balance sheets, in careful surveys, and in official reports quite as clearly as they are across the face of France all the way from the Pyrenees to the Channel ports. Indeed it was with some doubt that the writer, after covering that distance during May, all by daylight, sought figures, in the fear that they might belie the impressionistic picture that he had wondered at as it was disclosed before him. But the figures supplied the detail and definition which the picture lacked. France to-day presents a greater and more glorious canvas than any that hangs in the Louvre—it is herself.

As Kipling in London, with his eyes glowing as they must have glowed when he wrote "France, beloved of every soul that loves its fellow-kind!" said, "that picture of France every one in England and America ought to see." But unluckily that isn't possible. And photographs are wholly inadequate. So too are either written descriptions or statistics. There is that Soul of France in it all, that no camera or pen can get. But photograph, description, and fact appear to be the only

miracle



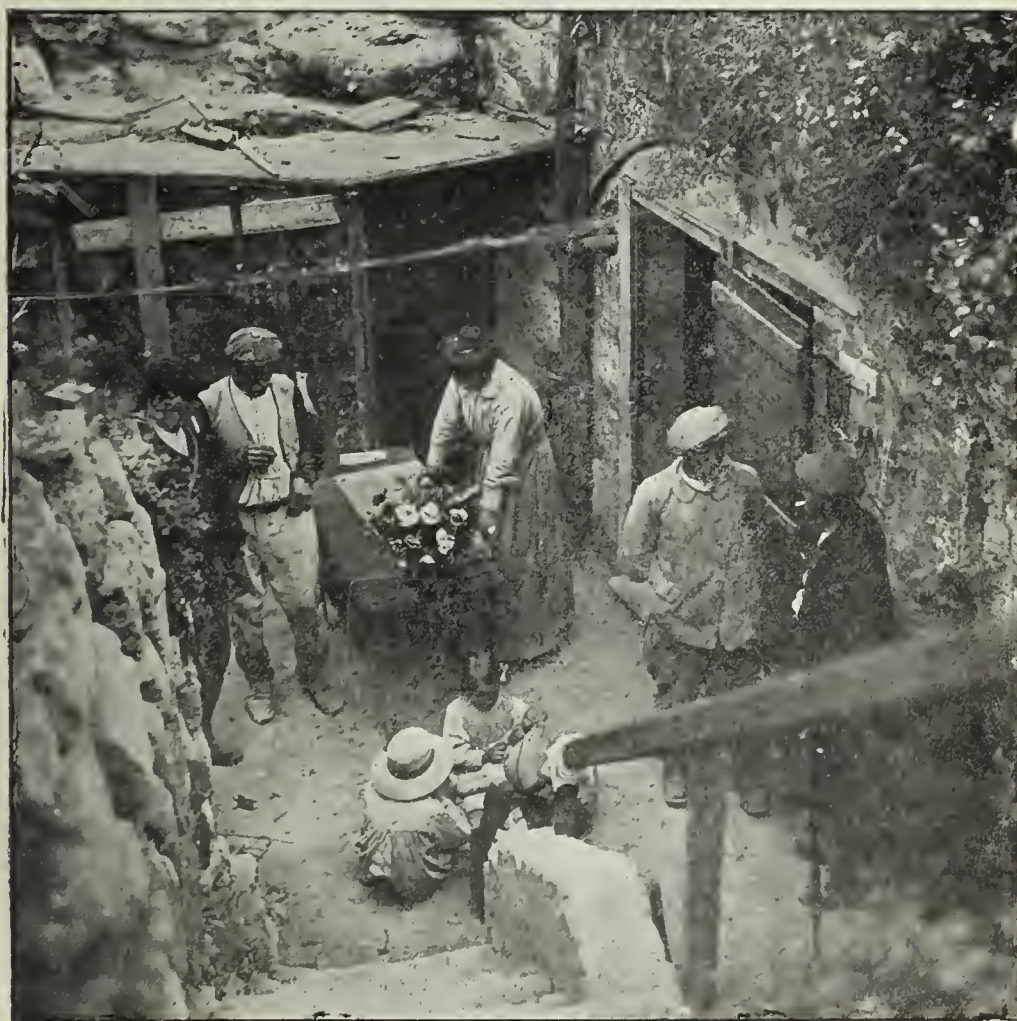
A NEW ROAD

Roads as well as factories and villages were utterly destroyed. But everywhere through the devastated area the roads are being reconstructed, and are evidence of the determination of the French to reclaim the desert left by the Germans

MISS ANNE MORGAN (STANDING) AND MRS. A. M. DIKE

These two American women have been very energetic in their work with the Committee for Devastated France. Their activity is in the devastated area, and has aided greatly in the work of reconstruction





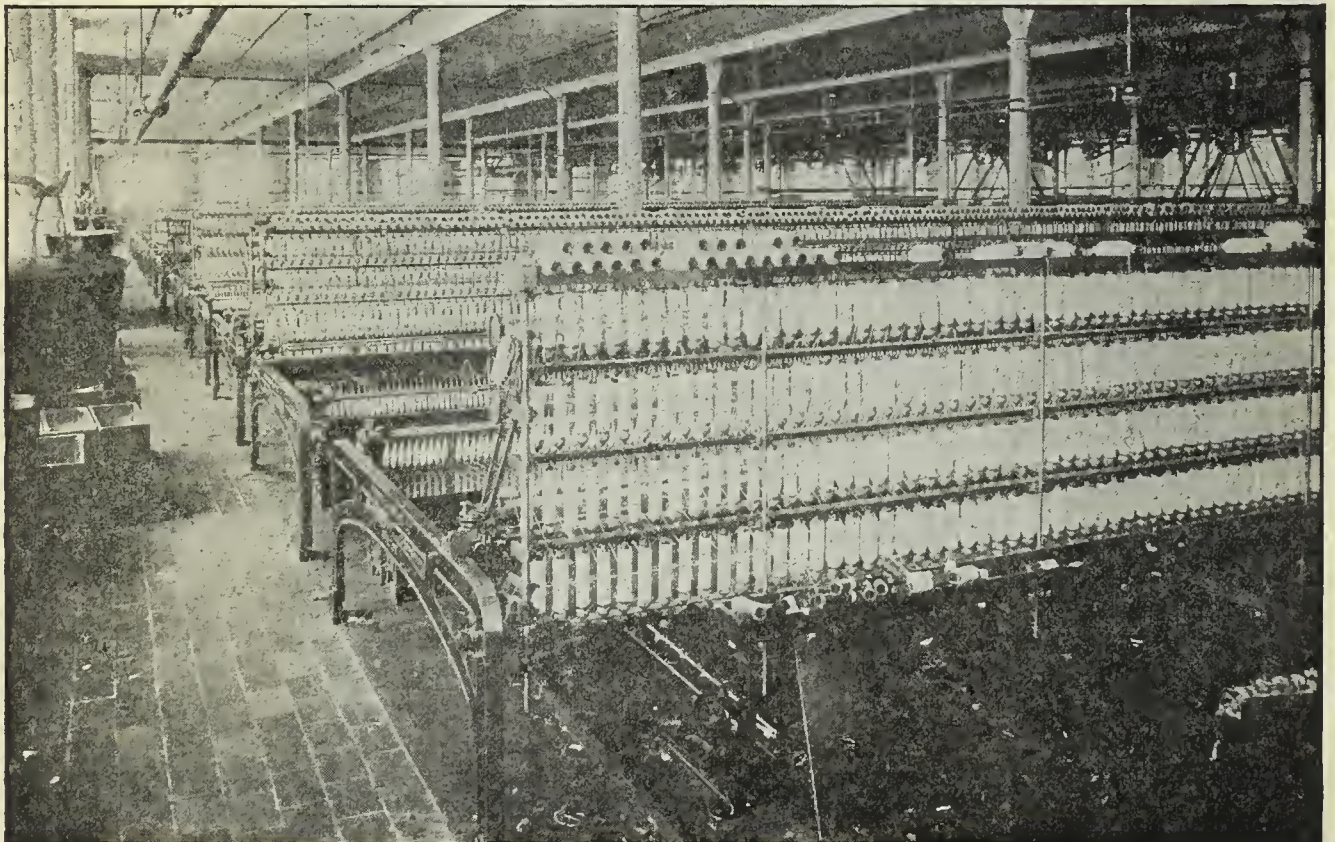
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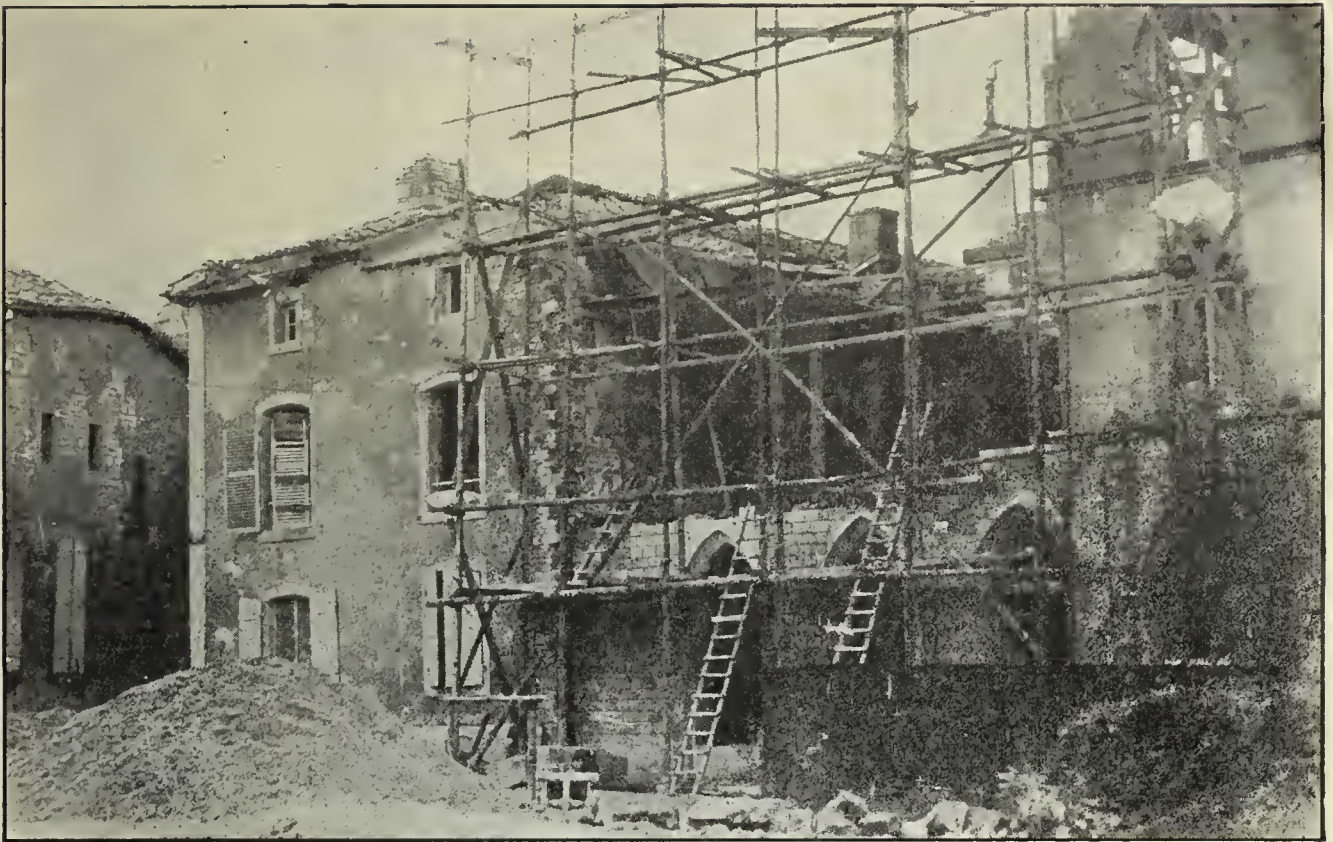
Temporarily a family has made their residence in a dugout, but the newly constructed home in the upper picture is an example of what is being done to house those driven out by the war



DESTROYED AND REBUILT

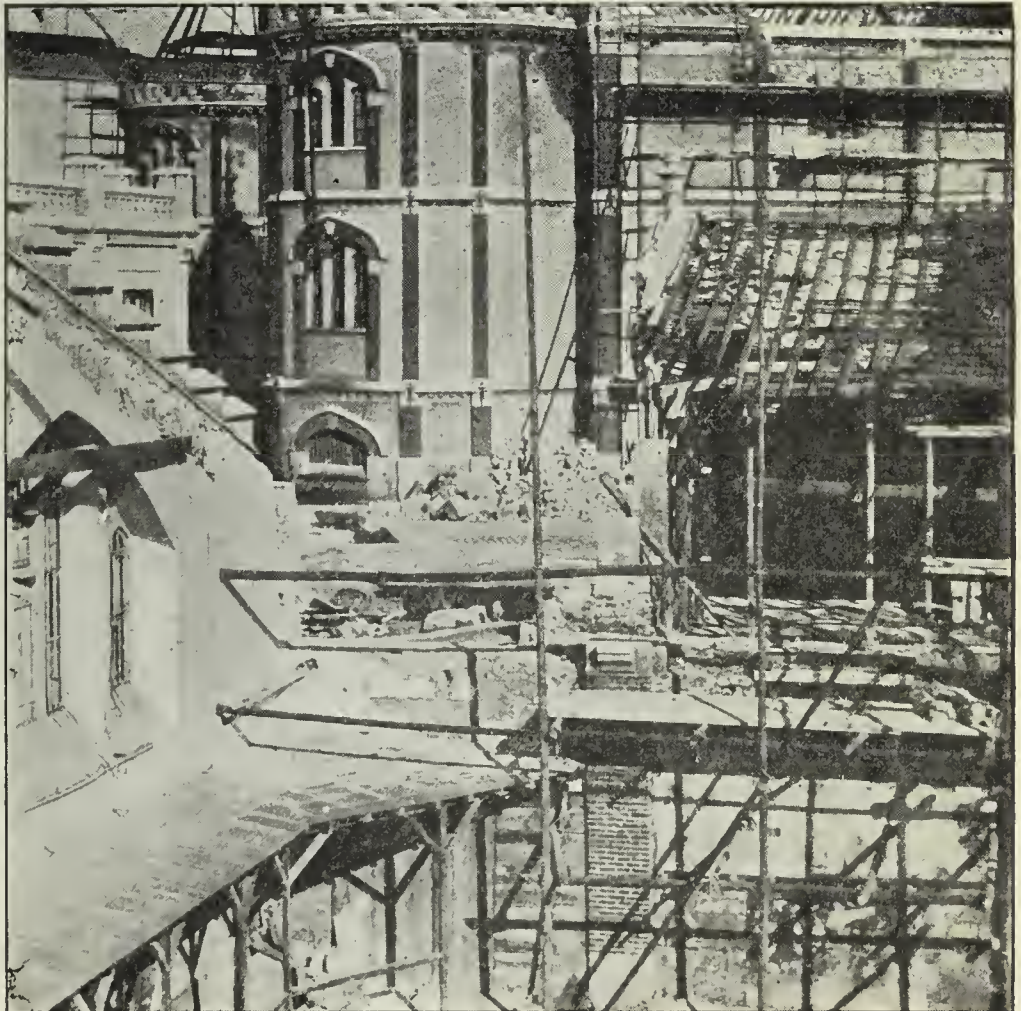
The fiendish completeness with which the Germans destroyed factories and machinery is shown by the upper picture. The lower illustration is of the same factory in Lille, rebuilt and in operation





REBUILDING VER- DUN

Reconstruction amid the ruins of the city that withstood the war's greatest fury. Slowly the city is becoming habitable, the streets are passable, the bridges are being repaired, and many buildings are already in use



RHEIMS

First the streets are repaired and cleaned. Then follows the removal of debris and the sorting of usable material. Later comes the actual work of reconstruction



AMERICAN CATTLE IN FRANCE

All the reconstruction is not in rebuilding. The live stock was killed or driven off, and the Germans are sending back scrub horses and cattle to take the places of the better ones they drove into Germany. These cattle have been imported from America



MODERN FARM MACHINERY

The war has brought France face to face with the necessity of improving her farm methods. The great number of lives lost and the vital need for increased production have resulted in the importation of American plows, tractors, and other machines



RECONSTRUCTING THE CANALS

In many places the canals were all but obliterated by the heavy shell fire. These pictures were taken from the same spot looking in the same direction as the cluster of trees on the right in each picture shows. Many canals have been put in operation and others are being rebuilt



REBUILDING ON A LARGE SCALE

This factory and hundreds of others were entirely destroyed, the buildings were razed and the machinery shipped into Germany or battered to pieces. Already many factories are in operation and others are being rapidly rebuilt



BUILDING CONCRETE HOUSES

Permanence of construction is an attribute of most French building, and in the new structures going up concrete is widely used. Many houses and barns, bridges and culverts are being "poured"

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substitutes for the most depressing, and at the same time, the most cheerful journey that can be taken by any one. Kipling's earnest injunction to visit France will be repeated by everyone who has seen France in these heroic days of 1920.

Let us first look at a few facts, making these the pigment for the picture. At the Sorbonne a few weeks ago, the Minister of the Liberated Regions, M. Ogier, in a written address gave these astonishing figures: France, since the signing of the Versailles Treaty, has advanced to the people of the devastated departments 9,609,082,916 francs for agricultural and industrial reconstruction. With this government support, the inhabitants of those departments have bent their backs to the task, aided by every sou they could get themselves, and reopened 5,345 out of the 6,445 schools that were in these regions before the war; having in their blood that inheritance of the eternal life of the family, they have built or rebuilt 28,200 temporary dwellings in wood and 16,800 permanent dwellings in stone, in addition to erecting 28,500 wooden barracks to replace houses destroyed.

Even before these dwellings and schools were rebuilt the cultivation of the land was begun. And what an insuperable undertaking this appeared to be—to-day the wire entanglements on a good deal of the land remind one of the cactus plains of Arizona and New Mexico. But the pigment of fact again enables us to put in the picture the luminous detail that, of the 3,950,000 hectares of land (a hectare is about two and a half acres) rendered unfit for cultivation by the war, 3,339,000 hectares have been cleared of projectiles and 2,780,000 hectares have been cleared of barbed wire and all trenches in the same area have been filled in:

TIRELESS HOURS OF WORK

NATURE has smiled generously on these scarred and all but destroyed fields, coöperating with these brave French who are showing the world how uncomplainingly they can help themselves. Traveling over miles of farm lands, in the department of the Ain, during May, they might have been mistaken for the flat farms of Illinois and Kansas, had it not been for the infrequency of houses and the poor character of those that were seen. And there was another difference, even more marked—American farmers complain that their "hired men" insist on practically union hours, but the

sons and daughters of France work from day-break until dusk. It was nearly twilight, as the car sped along from St. Quentin and the great cathedral at Laon was looming on its hill, but the tireless souls in the fields were still bending to their toil.

The lie that France is not at work should be seared on the lips of every one who utters it.

If she is not at work how can she be reclaiming her fields, rebuilding her roads and houses and factories and towns, and reëstablishing the shattered life over one fifth of her territory? That she is doing this, any one can see who visits France or who takes the small trouble to look up the facts. And she is doing it before she has received the indemnity pledged to her by the Peace Treaty and re-pledged again and again by every one of her allies. Mr. Lloyd George made an electoral campaign after the Armistice on the promise that Germany would be compelled to pay the entire cost of the war, including full indemnity to France. President Wilson included in the fourteen points, on which Germany struck her colors and sued for peace, one which stipulated "restoration of all invaded portions of French territory." The Treaty itself embodied this stipulation in the clearest terms. France surely had no reason to believe that the Versailles Treaty was to be "another scrap of paper." But it took the conferences of San Remo, Hythe, and Spa before the foundation guaranty of the Treaty in regard to German disarmament was supported by even the promise of fulfillment—"after six months." In Paris, Frenchmen of such widely differing views as Clemenceau, Bourgeois, Tardieu, Lauzanne, and Baron d'Estournelle de Constant expressed a common view on this shocking delay, in practically these words: "Why should France be expected to acquiesce in the economic restoration of Germany unless and until the Treaty's basic guaranty of Germany's disarmament has been carried out?" There was no bitterness in the words or any sound of *revanche* in them. But they came deep from the soul of France, expressing an unconquerable common determination—the determination that "it must never happen again."

At Spa, Millerand's temperate, even sympathetic speech showed that France was seeking no "pound of flesh." She had no wish to crush Germany, but, as her sturdy Premier put it, she was willing to coöperate in restoring

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her industries if Germany went forward, meeting the terms of the Treaty as she had agreed to do. But behind the premier's honest words was the marshal's baton of Foch, "the gun behind the door," which the world may be compelled to conclude is the only argument Germany will ever be willing to respect.

While these conferences were being held France was at work. She didn't wait or lose a day. Just as she flocked to the colors to save herself, and "the world," as the Allies reiterated in every tongue but German and Turkish, she steadily and swiftly returned to her devastated soil. Not, of course, with the instantaneous action that marked the rush in the tense days of August, 1914, but just as surely. To-day, less than two years from the Armistice, the population in the invaded regions has grown from less than 2 million in November, 1918, to more than 4 million, approximately three quarters of the pre-war population. And the return was not that of the prodigal son. The "husks" of débris and desolation, in this great parable, were at the homeward end of the journey. The "fatted calves" have to be raised before they are served at any homecoming feasts. But the magic in this miracle of reconstruction seems to be in that very fact of the home-coming itself. No one can ever feel what the immeasurable love is which the French people have for their soil until he sees them reclaiming and tilling it in the devastated regions. It is as if they knew in their hearts that the soil was an heirloom, handed down to them for a thousand years, and, in turn, to be left as a legacy to those coming after. Some Millet might picture these peasants of to-day, in a reverent attitude, listening to an Angelus beneath their feet. For it must be a bell of hope to their ears to have the knowledge, which experiment seems to have demonstrated to be sound, that practically all of their soil, even the most shell-torn and riven can be reclaimed. H. B. Fullerton, an American Agricultural Expert, returned to the United States in July, after two months in the devastated regions, confident in the belief that his experiments had shown that nearly all of the soil can be restored. He was sent to France by the American Committee for Devastated France, of which Miss Anne Morgan, Mrs. A. M. Dike, and Miss Mary Aldrich are the indefatigable leaders. This committee is now organizing the Institute of Applied Agriculture to help forward the work of better soil

cultivation and, following its wise policy, it proposes to turn the Institute over to France when it is well established and its utility demonstrated. It was encouraging to observe that the American work in progress in France was carried on in close coördination with the French, and was being turned over to the French, or discontinued, whenever that could be properly done. The American Red Cross, after doing a great deal in helping the peasants get farm implements, has turned over most of its work to the French Red Cross. The anti-tuberculosis work, begun by the Rockefeller Foundation and developed to the point of demonstration, has been transferred to the different departments in which it had been undertaken. The value of all this coöperation, in building up morale as well as in actual accomplishment, is fully acknowledged by the French. There is still much to do and so keen a man on the needs of the situation as André Tardieu, the first minister of the Liberated Regions and the organizer, in great degree, of the larger policies of reconstruction, said in a recent letter to the American Committee for Devastated France: "I hope that your work will continue, adapting itself from day to day, as it has up to the present, to the ever changing needs of the territory Germany has ruined."

AMERICAN FARM IMPLEMENTS

INTRODUCING the French peasant to the great value of machinery in tilling soil is probably America's best contribution to this work of reconstruction. The holdings of land often cover but a few acres and the peasant has found that the wheel hoe, for example, will do the work of six men and, on large farms, that the tractor will plow more land than six horses. This is a revelation, a discovery of astonishing moment to him. And he has formed hundreds of coöperative societies to buy and operate tractors. He has claimed the wheel hoe for his own and wants to see its tribe increased.

As a result, to a considerable degree, of this mechanical assistance, greatly increasing the producing power of the fewer workers, the devastated regions in 1920 will raise enough crops for food.

The story of industrial progress is almost as remarkable as that of agriculture. In aiding both, there has been the encouraging hand of the Government. A manufacturer whose plant had been destroyed has been provided with credit up to the amount that would be re-

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quired to rebuild the plant at the present cost. This is practically five times greater than the pre-war cost. The Government has met this difficult task of financing, simply because it had to be met. An Industrial Bureau has been established for the devastated regions and it passes on all applications for credit, does collective buying, and in many practical ways serves the manufacturers struggling to their feet. This Bureau is almost on a war basis, as far as power to take direct action is concerned. For example, it has the right to draw checks on local banks in advancing money to manufacturers. This cutting of red tape has had much to do with the steady industrial recovery. On May first of this year, 2,627 of the 3,508 factories destroyed in the war had resumed production. They employ 300,000 workers. In such industrial centres as Lille, 80 per cent. of the textile mills were destroyed. In Armentières, the centre of linen manufacture, all its forty linen mills were wholly destroyed. In Fourmies, out of 700,000 bobbins, all but 50,000 were ruined. Roubaix and Turcoing had the same degree of destruction. So it was throughout the whole industrial region of the north, the great workshop of France. The tale of rebuilding, now to be added to their annals, will always be a chapter of achievement, almost as important and vital as the defense against the German invasion, even if less tensely dramatic. But the tale is not without its high lights. These can be seen, together with a vast amount of fact and incident, on the pages of a book, "Rising Above the Ruins of France" that has just come from the press of the Putnams. In it are gathered a body of data and figures which supplement in detail and corroborate fully the views and statements presented in this magazine article.

The rise of northern France from what seemed to be the ruin of her industry must be a staggering surprise to Germany. During the war the Germans declared that they would be able to begin the manufacture of woollens at least two years before the mills they had destroyed in Lille could be rebuilt and put in operation. To-day 80 per cent. of these mills in Lille are humming with the cheerful music of their looms.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COAL

AT THE base of this restored industrial activity, is coal. And there comes in the tragedy of Lens. This great centre of France's coal

mining region was one of the strategic objectives of both sides throughout the war. The Germans captured and held it and then deliberately set about to destroy it utterly. They all but succeeded, flooding the mines, destroying the machinery and leaving this vast power-station of French industry, as they believed, wrecked beyond possibility of recovery. But again they were in error, as Bismarck was in 1870 when he thought the French nation was beaten to its knees, never to rise—they reckoned without the Soul of France.

Lens, which was left a charred ruin above ground and a black and almost fathomless depth of water below ground is surely, but, of necessity, slowly, recovering. The chief engineer of one of her largest mining companies gave this clear statement of the situation, published in this book to which reference has been made, and this is typical of the difficulties confronting the French coal industry and of the unconquerable spirit that is slowly overcoming them:

"Before the war the yearly production of our mines was 4 million tons. We had 30 shafts and 17,000 workmen. Now about 1,500 are back working at cleaning up and pumping. The Germans flooded the mines of Lens and our first problem is to get the water out. It will be pumped into the canals. By the end of 1920 we expect to have the water out. When the galleries are dry the cleaning and repairing will commence. This will be a slow process. We will need thousands of workmen for it. By 1922 we hope to have the mines producing and to employ about 8,000 miners. Within five or six years we expect to be working up to three quarters of before the war production."

COAL PRODUCTION

THIS tremendous task of restoration, imposed deliberately on France by Germany, was the complete justification of Millerand's stand at Spa for coal, even if the Versailles Treaty had not definitely stipulated that Germany should supply about 3,000,000 tons a month. This was scaled down at Spa to 2,000,000 tons a month, but this amount, with France's increasing production, will partially meet the present industrial demand. It will not fully meet it, however. One important factor has appeared in the problem that had not been clearly understood. * Before the war, construction work was carried on in the mines to open up new veins, concurrently with the

production work. Since the war, the pressing necessity for maximum production has caused a discontinuance of the essential construction work—at least of most of it. This situation, when fully appreciated, could not be at once improved because of demands for higher wages and shorter hours, labor difficulties and an inadequate supply of workmen. But in the summer of 1920, progress was being made in overcoming these conditions. Following a careful survey the decision was reached that 30,000 or 40,000 foreign workmen would have to be secured. By the end of this year it is believed that 10,000 of these will be at work. This increase of man power, with the progress being made in restoration, will increase materially the coal production of last year, which reached a total of 21,863,000 tons, of which 2,326,000 tons came from the mines of Alsace-Lorraine. The distribution of coal is entirely in the hands of the Government, which pays 90 francs per ton for it at the mines, adds a consumer's tax of 160 per cent. ad valorem, and sells it at 250 francs per ton. This consumption tax, which is a universal thing in the French fiscal system, produces revenue and equalizes the price of French coal compared to the price of foreign coal, a differential that has been much affected by exchange. The coal problem is a vital one but it will be met, if Germany keeps her treaty pledge, renewed at Spa, as France is meeting her hard task of restoration and production.

CONFIDENCE AND COURAGE

THE revival of industry in manufacturing, mining, and agriculture, has been revealed at once in the steady improvement of the foreign commerce of France. For the first five months of this year exports increased 182.1 per cent. over the corresponding period of last year, while imports were only 17.3 per cent. greater. This has brought an improvement in the trade balance against France of two billion francs. That way progress lies, together with the improvement of the exchange situation and commercial safety.

In May the writer, as a member of the organization committee of the International Chamber of Commerce, under the chairmanship of M. Etienne Clementel, sat in conference in Paris with a number of the French leaders of commerce and industry. He was deeply impressed, as were his American colleagues, with the confidence and courage shown by

these men. There was nothing quixotic or emotional about them, but their confidence and courage manifestly were guided by knowledge and based on an unalterable faith in their country. The prescient saying of J. P. Morgan the elder at once came to mind, that fundamental character is the surest basis for credit.

The improvement in both the domestic and foreign commerce has been made possible, in considerable degree, by the steady improvement in transportation. All of the railroads destroyed have been rebuilt and reopened. The work of reconstruction on the "Nord" Railroad, traversing the devastated regions and suffering the greatest damage, shows what is being done. The recent report of the president of this road states that of more than 600 bridges destroyed 475 have been rebuilt and 80 more are in course of reconstruction. Of three important tunnels destroyed all have been rebuilt. Of 390 railway stations destroyed 200 have been rebuilt and other reconstruction has made similar progress.

During the war 1,100 kilometers of canal were destroyed and virtually all of this has been reopened to navigation, 136 wharves that had been destroyed have been rebuilt and 28 new ones constructed. The canal system of France has always been an essential factor in the transportation of the country. To-day it is approaching normal, just as the railway system is, in ability to serve the country.

All of these problems in French reconstruction get back to a question of finance. There can be no doubt as to the staunch spirit of the people. There can be no doubt, unless it be in the minds of those who wanted to see Germany win the war, that France is at work—men, women, and children. The world which has always marveled at the industry of the women of France must to-day pay them the homage of even greater praise for the way they have taken up the crushing burdens placed upon them by the war. Of course the women of the nation, old and young, are in black from Marseilles to Calais, for every family is in mourning; but they are in the fields, in the factories—everywhere—doing the work they did before the war, besides much of the work of the men killed in the war. And with their thrift and prudence in management they are helping France meet this enormous problem in finance.

But how is France really meeting that problem? Some people in England and America

are saying she is not doing her full duty in meeting it. In the main they seem to be people who are either frankly pro-German or those who have been led by Keynes and his disciples to believe that Germany is a far better economic risk than France and should, therefore, have her industries restored first. It may surprise some of these critics to know that a comparative study of the latest budgets of England and France shows that France is paying a per capita tax relatively higher, when relative resources are considered, than that of England and but 10 francs less in actual per capita amount. Mr. Paul Doumer lately submitted a comparative statement to the French Senate showing that the new budget of 21 billion francs to be met by 38 million people meant a per capita tax of 550 francs, while the per capita tax of Great Britain, under her new budget, was 560 francs. He further showed that should Germany's per capita tax be raised to the French level it would produce, from her 68 million inhabitants, a total of 37 billion or 38 billion francs per annum, enough to meet a payment of 12,500,000,000 francs toward her indemnity, besides meeting her own budget.

Then there is heavy obligation of France's foreign debts. Speaking of these, in the spring of this year, Premier Millerand said:

"We do not request cancellation of our debts. We only ask time to breathe and to recover after four and one half years of exhausting war. Our propositions are those which any debtor would feel right in making in the interest of both himself and his creditors.

"If France is obliged to meet her obligations abroad, at present rates of exchange, she would be forced to pay $2\frac{1}{2}$ times what she owes. Thus, after spending for the common good 30 billion francs, borrowed from her friends, she would have to pay 45 billion francs as France's premium to these same friends. Of course, that is not what they mean to require from us.

"France is determined to rise from the ruins accumulated on her soil by the battle of nations. She will be able to make the necessary fiscal effort, taking all the measures the situation requires."

This resolute prime minister, who has been steadily growing in the public estimation of the world, has given a fresh evidence of his own determination that France hold true to the path of restoration by the prompt and courageous action he took during the railway strike in May. By his vigor and firmness he ended

it within three days, as the writer has good reason to recall. I was waiting across the Spanish border in San Sebastian for the re-opening of traffic and the first train to Paris. The third morning of the strike, traffic was resumed and an interrupted journey continued. That first train out of Bordeaux for the north made its way without the slightest interference, because of the strong man at the helm in Paris. That man has the confidence of his country and of the Allies and he is steering France over turbulent waters to a safe port.

No one who has seen France in the stress of these hard days would think of saying that her course to that safe port is free from danger. It is tempestuous, and any craft less staunch than France would very likely go on the rocks; but the land of Joan of Arc is staunch to the depths of her Soul, and that is her strength and salvation.

THE GIFT OF DEMOCRATIC JUSTICE

FRANCE has been a conservator of civilization for centuries. At Tours, Charles Martel turned back the Saracen and saved Europe. At the Marne, Joffre turned back the Germans and again saved Europe and the world. In the twelve hundred years between, France has been a leader of thought and progress. To-day her ability to serve the world is greater than ever before. The world's need of that service is likewise greater. France has stood for human rights and for property rights. Between these two there has arisen an irrepressible conflict. The Bolsheviki sweeping from the northeast, as the Saracens did from the southeast, are proclaiming the destruction of property rights, through their transference to the people of the world collectively. No narrow view of property rights, concentrated in the hands of the few, can hope to prevail in any coming battle of Tours. France has more property owners, in proportion to her population, than any country in the world. She has more investors. She has democratized property rights so they are practically coextensive with human rights. By making the two virtually interchangeable she has protected both. France has pointed the one safe way to maintain the rights of private property. Within her borders those rights are universally exercised and enjoyed; and because of that they are universally defended. France has a greater thing than her economic power, great as that power is—she has the supreme gift of democratic justice.

